

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 309540

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: MORNING SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT REPORTS

1. ALGERIAN VIEW OF OIL PRICES

EMBASSY ALGIERS REPORTS THAT PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE CON-
VEYED TO THE IRANIANS IN EARLY DECEMBER THE VIEW THAT
SHOULD THE SAUDIS GO IT ALONE, IN OR OUT OF OPEC, THEY
WOULD LOSE MUCH OF THEIR POWER AND INFLUENCE. THIS
COMMENT SUGGESTS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE DIVISIONS WHICH
BECAME APPARENT AT DOHA WERE BREWING PRIOR TO THE MEETING.
REPORTEDLY, BOUMEDIENE:
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--SAID THAT OPEC SHOULD FIND A WAY TO "DEPOLITICIZW"
OIL PRICING SO AS TO AVOID IT BECOMING THE SUBJECT
OF INTERNATIONAL FOCUS AND PRESSURES EVERY SIX
MONTHS; AND

--SUGGESTED THAT A MECHANISM BE DEVELOPED TO PROVIDE
FOR AUTOMATIC PRICE INCREASES TO OBVIATE THE NEED
FOR A REHASH AT EVERY MEETING.

EMBASSY COMMENT: WE STILL SUSPECT THAT HAD THE SAUDIS
ENGAGED IN ANY ARM TWISTING, THE ALGERIANS WOULD HAVE
BEEN AMONG THE FIRST TO CAVE. WE ARE PERSUADED THAT,
GIVEN THEIR PAST RECORD, THE ALGERIANS WILL BE AMONG THE
FIRST TO ENGAGE IN PRICE SHAVING SHOULD IT BECOME NECES-
SARY TO DISPOSE OF THEIR OIL. (CONFIDENTIAL) ALGIERS
2976, 12/21.

2. SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS ON THE MEND?

EMBASSY DAMASCUS REPORTS THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT BOTH
SYRIA AND THE USR ARE ATTEMPTING TO PATCH UP DIFFERENCES
STEMMING FROM THE LEBANESE CRISIS. FOLLOWING A RECENT
VISIT BY A SOVIET FRIENDSHIP DELEGATION, REPRESENTATIVES
OF THE TWO GOVERNMENTS SIGNED A JOINT COMMUNIQUE WHICH:

--STRESSED THE "SPECIAL IMPORTANCE OF SYRO-SOVIET
FRIENDSHIP;"

--APPEALED FOR A MIDDLE EAST SOLUTION BASED ON
COMPLETE ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORY
AND RECOGNITION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS;

--HOPED THAT THE LEBANESE COULD SETTLE THEIR IN-
TERNAL PROBLEMS PEACEFULLY, TAKING INTO CONSIDER-
ATION THE "LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN
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RESISTANCE" (CONFIDENTIAL) DAMASCUS 8630, 12/17.
ROBINSON

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